

Talking Points
Governor's Conference on Tourism
Tuesday, February 17, 2009
Hattiesburg

- Building on the theme of cultural and heritage tourism
- The Mississippi Division of Tourism established a Certified Cultural Corners Program in 2008 that identifies communities of less than 20,000 in Mississippi that have cultural heritage assets of national significance in at least two of the following areas:

American Indian heritage
Art and Architecture
Civil War history
Civil Rights history
Culinary culture
Literary heritage
Musical heritage

- For 2009, I am pleased to announce the selection of the following communities, their region, and their areas of cultural heritage:

Pontotoc - The Hills: Art and Architecture, Civil War

Rolling Fork - The Delta: American Indian, Art and Architecture, Civil War, Music, and the Teddy Roosevelt story

Aberdeen - The Pines: Art and Architecture, Civil War

Port Gibson - The Capital/River Region: Art and Architecture, Civil War, Civil Rights

Bay St. Louis - Art and Architecture, Culinary

I congratulate these communities on their selection in this important program.

- Blues Trail a very successful project – First highway signs have been placed designating Highway 61 as “The Blues Highway” in recognition of Mississippi’s emerging identity as the “Birthplace of America’s Music”
- Mississippi takes center stage:
 - Third “Mississippi Grammy” Event scheduled May 28 in Tunica
 - Blue Cross/Blue Shield Blues Marathon attracts runners from all over the world
 - Viking Classic
 - National Governors Association meeting this summer in Biloxi

Legislative Update

- SB 2336 - With the help of Marty Stuart and others, we're also launching a "Country Music Trail" through Mississippi that will feature programs and historical markers. This legislation has passed the Senate and has been transmitted to the House.

Here are some other tourism-related bills we are monitoring:

HB 146

County tourism commissions; include as a governmental unit under the Interlocal Cooperation Act. 02/11 (S)
Referred To Tourism (Ishee)

HB1423

Tourism; establish certain trail markers and commissions, revise definition of tourism project for certain incentive programs. 02/17 (S) Referred To Tourism; Appropriations (Peranich)

HB1467

Tourism; revise definition of tourism project for purposes of tourism project sales tax incentive program. 02/09 (S)
Referred To Tourism; Finance (Peranich)

HB1479

Tourism; establish certain trails, markers and commissions. 02/10 (S) Referred To Tourism; Appropriations (Peranich)

SB2474

Mississippi Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission; establish. 02/09 (H) Referred To Tourism (Chassaniol)

SB3116

Tourism projects; extend period of time during which certain projects are eligible for incentive. 02/11 (H) Referred To Tourism; Ways and Means

SB2473

"Hill Fire" folk life play in Montgomery County; MDA to promote and provide grants for financing of statewide advertising program. 02/13 (S) Transmitted To House (Chassaniol)

Closing

Thank you for what you do to promote Mississippi's tremendous tourism assets.

Despite today's dire economic times, what you do continues to play a huge role in Mississippi's well-being.